Can We Talk?
Adding a Smart Assistant Interface to Library Services

Coalition for Networked Information
December 9, 2019
Today’s presentation

The Iowa State University (ISU) Library is working with a company called ConverSight.ai to develop smart assistant technology in the form of an app for mobile devices (Android and iOS) that leverages various library system APIs. Currently the app uses APIs to connect to the ISU Library’s ExLibris Primo system and also the library’s SpringShare LibCal system.

This session will present information learned so far in the ISU project. A live demonstration of the smart assistant technology will be provided as part of this session.
Industry Drivers - Smart Assistants

• By 2019, more than half of all mobile searches will be voice or visual searches — mobile visual searches accounting for 20%. (Gartner)
• By 2021, early adopter brands that redesign their websites to support visual and voice search will increase digital commerce revenue by 30%. (Gartner)
• By 2019, content management systems will expose voice/visual tags and metadata. (Gartner)
• By 2018, 75% of organizations will deploy AI-assisted toolsets in at least one application (IDC, 2016).
Industry Drivers - Smart Assistants

• By 2019, Voice personal assistants (VPAs) will exist two per kitchen. (Gartner)
• In 2020, AI becomes a positive net job motivator; creating 2.3M jobs while only eliminating 1.8M jobs. (Gartner)
• 16% of Americans 18+ own a Smart Speaker, or around 39 million people. (Smart Audio Report)
• In the 2017 Holiday Season: • 7% of Americans got a Smart Speaker • 4% of Americans got their first Smart Speaker. (Smart Audio Report)
• By 2019, 75% of workers will be interacting with digital assistants (IDC, 2016).
Industry Drivers - Smart Assistants

- 30% of Smart Speaker owners say their speaker is replacing time spent with TV. (Smart Audio Report)
- 71% are listening to more audio since getting a Smart Speaker. (Smart Audio Report)
- 28% who are listening to more audio said they are listening to more podcasts. (Smart Audio Report)
- 23% who are listening to more audio said they are listening to more news/talk. (Smart Audio Report)
- By 2020, chatbots will lead to $60 billion each year in cost savings through productivity improvements for US enterprises (IDG, 2016)
Industry Drivers - Smart Assistants

• A September 2018 survey by Voicebot.ai of over 1,000 U.S. adults found that 57.8 million own at least one smart speaker.

• By 2021, Gartner, Inc. predicts that 25 percent of digital workers will use a virtual employee assistant (VEA) on a daily basis. This will be up from less than 2 percent in 2019.

• Gartner predicts that, by 2023, 25 percent of employee interactions with applications will be via voice, up from under 3 percent in 2019.
Smart Assistants in the Academic Library

- A question of when, not if....
The strategic planning question.... When will library system vendors add smart assistant technology, and will it become part of the product core, or will it be an add on?

• What to do while we wait for an answer to emerge?

*** Newsflash - ExLibris to add microphone button to Primo ***
ConverSight.ai (ThickStat) - Libro
Phase 1 – Amazon Alexa Skill - No personally identifying information (PII)

To minimize concerns related to privacy, the design scope for Parks Libro was limited to only functions that did not require personally identifying information. Functions included the ability to search the library catalog via Primo API, and check library hours and events via the SpringShare LibCal API.
Phase 2 – Parks Libro App using Amazon Alexa voice services

- Handles patron authentication with ISU IdP (OKTA)
- New functionality
  - Request item
  - Check MyAccount Inventory
- Requires the user to have an Amazon Alexa account

Not everyone is on the smart assistant bandwagon, mainly due to concerns about privacy
Phase 3 – Parks Libro App based on ConverSight.ai voice service (currently in development, planned Spring 2020

• Move away from Amazon Alexa for voice recognition
• Additional user account features – renewals, fees, returns, etc
• Multi-language support
• Chat/Text support
What’s in it for academic libraries (and Library IT)?

• A clear relationship exists between satisfaction with IT and satisfaction with IT innovation. (InfoTech)
  • IT innovation leadership explains 75% of variation in satisfaction with IT
  • Only 20% of those dissatisfied with IT innovation leadership were satisfied with IT
Risk/Reward

Act

- *Act and Success*
  - Process maturity improved
  - Agile/Lean methods adopted
  - Knowledgebase(s) in order
  - Digital enterprise strategy developed
  - CSM benefits
  - Higher risk of project failure

- *Act but fail*
  - Process maturity improved
  - Agile/Lean methods adopted
  - Knowledgebase(s) in order
  - Digital enterprise strategy developed
  - Higher risk of project failure
Risk/Reward

Don’t Act

• No process improvements
• Innovation stagnates
• Low level of effort
• Lower level of investment
• Low risk
Live Demo

Other Arts Follow Agriculture Panel
Questions?

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